

# SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress  
1st Session

Vote No. 419

September 13, 1995, 4:01 p.m.  
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## WELFARE REFORM ACT/No Cash Welfare for Teens' Illegitimate Babies

**SUBJECT:** Family Self-Sufficiency Act of 1995 . . . H.R. 4. Faircloth amendment No. 2603 to the Dole modified perfecting amendment No. 2280 to the committee substitute amendment.

### ACTION: AMENDMENT REJECTED, 24-76

**SYNOPSIS:** As reported with a committee substitute amendment, H.R. 4, the Family Self-Sufficiency Act, will overhaul six of the Nation's ten largest welfare programs.

The Dole modified perfecting amendment would strike the provisions of the committee substitute amendment and insert in lieu thereof substitute provisions, entitled "The Work Opportunity Act of 1995."

**The Faircloth amendment** would forbid using funds from this Act to give cash benefits for a child born out of wedlock to an unmarried individual less than 18 years of age unless that individual conceived the child from an act of rape or incest or unless that individual lived in a State which, in its first legislative session after enactment of this Act, passed a law which allowed for cash benefits. States could provide vouchers instead of cash benefits to purchase specific goods and services for the children of unmarried minors. The amendment would go into effect for each State following its first legislative session after enactment of this Act, except that it would go into effect sooner for any State that passed legislation with the same prohibitions.

**Those favoring** the amendment:

A problem cannot be solved by tinkering around the edges; the root cause must be addressed. The root cause of welfare dependency is illegitimacy. Unless we are willing to discourage illegitimacy we will not be able to reform welfare. The link between illegitimacy and dependency, especially for teens, is unmistakable. Welfare offers teenage girls cash payments for having illegitimate babies, and teenage girls are taking that offer.

Senators can give us all the anecdotal stories they want about the teens whom they have personally asked why teens have babies, but those stories are meaningless pap in the face of simple common sense, and in the face of the numerous social science studies for

(See other side)

YEAS (24)		NAYS (76)				NOT VOTING (0)	
Republicans (23 or 43%)	Democrats (1 or 2%)	Republicans (31 or 57%)		Democrats (45 or 98%)		Republicans (0)	Democrats (0)
Abraham	Byrd	Bennett	Hatch	Akaka	Inouye		
Ashcroft		Bond	Hatfield	Baucus	Johnston		
Brown		Burns	Jeffords	Biden	Kennedy		
Cochran		Campbell	Kassebaum	Bingaman	Kerrey		
Craig		Chafee	Lugar	Boxer	Kerry		
Faircloth		Coats	Mack	Bradley	Kohl		
Frist		Cohen	Murkowski	Breaux	Lautenberg		
Gramm		Coverdell	Packwood	Bryan	Leahy		
Grams		D'Amato	Pressler	Bumpers	Levin		
Helms		DeWine	Roth	Conrad	Lieberman		
Hutchison		Dole	Simpson	Daschle	Mikulski		
Inhofe		Domenici	Snowe	Dodd	Moseley-Braun		
Kempthorne		Gorton	Specter	Dorgan	Moynihan		
Kyl		Grassley	Stevens	Exon	Murray		
Lott		Gregg	Thomas	Feingold	Nunn		
McCain			Warner	Feinstein	Pell		
McConnell				Ford	Pryor		
Nickles				Glenn	Reid		
Santorum				Graham	Robb		
Shelby				Harkin	Rockefeller		
Smith				Heflin	Sarbanes		
Thompson				Hollings	Simon		
Thurmond					Wellstone		

#### EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

#### SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

those individuals who do not trust common sense. The common sense principle of human behavior that explains welfare dependency is that people will do more of something if they are paid to do it. In 1960, before the start of the Great Society programs, the illegitimacy rate was 5.3 percent. Since those programs began, it has steadily risen to the present one-third of all births. That illegitimacy is concentrated in pockets of poverty. In some poorer cities, the illegitimacy rate is now over 80 percent. Some Senators may be surprised that a welfare system that offers a teenage girl \$14,000 worth of benefits for having an illegitimate baby, including a free apartment away from her mother, has resulted in a huge increase in the number of teens having babies. We are not. That this result would occur is obvious.

For Senators who fail to see the link, we inform them that numerous studies, starting with the SIME/DIME study in the 1970s and continuing through the present, have shown that increasing welfare benefits increases the number of welfare enrollees. Whether teenagers, who make up a substantial portion of new enrollees, are consciously deciding to have illegitimate babies because of welfare is irrelevant; the fact is that they are having those babies as a result of the existence of welfare. It may well be that they are having babies for different reasons, knowing that welfare exists for them as a support. Welfare may be a goal, or it may be an enabler for another goal; either way, the direct link between welfare benefits and enrollees, a large percentage of whom have illegitimate babies, has been firmly established. Further, statistics show that women who have illegitimate children are much more likely to stay on welfare for a much greater period of time than are women who are recently divorced and have children. For most divorced women, welfare is a temporary dependency. For many women who have never married, welfare is a permanent support, starting when their first children are born to them as teenagers.

The House of Representatives has recognized the link between welfare and teen illegitimacy, and has consequently denied Federal cash benefits for teen mothers. The Faircloth amendment would not go as far. It would deny Federal cash benefits from going to such mothers unless the States voted otherwise. Additionally, any State that wished to could use Federal funds to give voucher benefits to teen mothers instead of cash benefits. Finally, nothing in the amendment would restrict a State from giving its own funds to its teen mothers. The Faircloth amendment is thus a very modest proposal. All it would do is create a general presumption against giving cash benefits to teen mothers. We urge our colleagues to vote in favor of this common sense proposal.

**Those opposing the amendment contended:**

**Argument 1:**

The first principle of welfare reform should be to "do no harm." We do not dispute that the current system appears to be harmful, but we note that it could become much worse. If welfare were stopped for teenage mothers, we have absolutely no confidence that the result would be that teenage girls would stop having illegitimate babies. They very well might continue, and a large number of those babies would suffer from malnutrition, neglect, and abuse. In fact, we think this result would be probable, because when we have asked teenagers why they have illegitimate children, we have been given a number of answers, but we have never been told that they did so to get welfare benefits.

Before welfare existed, some people produced illegitimate children in large numbers. Clearly, therefore, welfare is not the only factor involved in having children out of wedlock; other factors also must lead to illegitimacy. The fact that the nuclear family is disintegrating at all levels of society, not just the poorest, indicates that those other factors are increasing in strength. Like our colleagues, we are very concerned about this disintegration. We are well aware of the statistics that show the damage that is done to children in fatherless families. That damage is clearly more than financial--the behavioral consequences for children are much greater than any monetary costs. Federal welfare only mitigates the financial harm.

Removing welfare for teen mothers, instead of changing behavior as desired, might only result in greater financial distress for the children of those mothers. We simply do not know. Senators have spoken glowingly of jobs programs, but those programs have had only modest success. We understand and agree with the intent of the proponents of this amendment, but we are afraid that it would do more harm than good. We therefore urge the rejection of the Faircloth amendment.

**Argument 2:**

The policy advocated by the Faircloth amendment is not a policy that should be decided by the Federal Government. Under the Dole amendment, a State would be free to deny cash benefits to teenage mothers, or it could try other approaches which it thought might work. We look at the 30 years of failed Federal welfare policies that have only increased dependency and illegitimacy, and we look at the successful State efforts of the past few years to reduce welfare dependency (States were only recently allowed to make those efforts), and we conclude that States are better able to address this problem than is Congress.